

Civil military relations in “military democracies”: Military interventions in Turkey and Israel

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## **Abstract**

The study compares military interventions in Turkey and Israel and examine how civil-military relations evolved since state formation. The term "arbitrator army" has been used to describe militaries that determine the political outcomes in the societies they serve. Both Turkey and Israel have democratic systems. Both states have institutional and legal frameworks that stipulate the supremacy of the political leadership over the military, yet in both states the militaries intervene in politics and exert influence. The main purpose of study to explain how strong military influence in political issues has resulted in direct military interventions in Turkey but not in Israel. Through a historical comparison, this study examines how the civilian leadership has shared power with the military and what explains the breakdown of their partnership between the civilian and the military leadership. This study argues that the political institutions established during state building period determined the level and type of participation of the military in domestic politics.

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## List of Abbreviations

|       |                                                                                |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AKP:  | Justice and Development Party <i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i> (2001-present) |
| ANAP: | Motherland Party <i>Anavatan Partisi</i> (1983-present)                        |
| CHP:  | Republican People's Party <i>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi</i>                       |
| DP:   | Democrat Party <i>Demokrat Parti</i> (1946-1960)                               |
| DYP:  | True Path Party <i>Doğru Yol Partisi</i> (1983-2007)                           |
| GM:   | Gülen Movement                                                                 |
| IDF:  | Israeli Defense Forces (Tzva ha Hagana Le-Yisrael, Tzahal)                     |
| NSP:  | National Salvation Party <i>Milli Selâmet Party</i> (Islamist, 1972-1980)      |
| RP:   | Welfare Party <i>Refah Partisi</i> (Islamist, 1972-1980)                       |
| TAF:  | Turkish Armed Forces (Turk Silahlı Kuvvetleri, TSK)                            |

# **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this thesis is to compare civil-military relations in Turkey and Israel, focusing on the military's intervention in politics, rather than civilian intervention in the military. Noting that civil-military relations encompass a variety of interactions between the military and the political institutions such as the parliament, judiciary, government, and political parties, it is shown that the military in Israel and Turkey exerts considerable influence in political and civilian affairs. The role of the military in these countries does not conform to the normative civil-military dynamics in democracies, whereby the subordination of the armed forces to the civilian authorities of the state is observed. The purpose of this thesis is to compare the civil-military relations in Turkey and Israel to understand the different types and level of the military's intervention in politics.

Perlmutter (1981, 25) uses the terms "arbitrator army" to describe militaries that intervene to uphold the existing political order and resolve constitutional stalemates but remain interested in military issues, withdrawing once disputes are settled. It may also be the case that the civilian leadership requires the support of the military to secure its position, and therefore accommodates the demands of the military. Kamrava (2000, 69-70) cites Israel and Turkey as "military democracies," due to the role of the military as an arbitrator of political outcomes. Both states have representative institutions and electoral systems through which citizens vote for political parties. Both countries possess institutional frameworks that stipulate the supremacy of the political leadership over the military. Though in Israel and Turkey the subordination of the military is guaranteed through laws, pervasive military influence is also constitutionally regulated.

In a democratic regime in which the military is granted a constitutionally sanctioned independent role to act as the guardian, it is obvious that the democracy is under some form of military tutelage. The military controls other state agencies of the security apparatus, such as the police and intelligence and exercises civilian oversight over the democratically-elected civilian authorities. Consequently, the threat of a coup d'état limits the authority and scope of action of the democratically elected civilian government (Kuru 2012, 46). The degree to which the military participates directly or indirectly in domestic politics may vary. For issues that do not involve defense and security concerns, the military is likely to seek support by forming coalitions with civilian groups. In such regimes, the militaries may not govern directly, but are highly politicized (Cook 2007; Fitch 1998).

Article 35 of the Internal Service Law (ISL) of 1935 granted the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF, *Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri* TSK) its “guardianship” role, making the Turkish army responsible for protecting the Turkish homeland and guarding the Republic of Turkey as defined in the Constitution.<sup>1</sup> According to this provision, the TAF have intervened directly four times following periods of political instability, displacing the civilian government (in 1971 and 1997) and assuming direct military rule (in 1960 and 1980). The three instances of direct military rule have been brief- 1960-1961, 1971-1973, and 1980-1983. The 1997 “post-modern coup” which resulted in the dissolution of the coalition government and the political ban of the Welfare Party (RP, *Refah Partisi*), was the military’s campaign to alert the public to the threat the Islamist political parties posed to the secular political order (Cook 2007, 124-5). In 2007, the e-memorandum published on

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<sup>1</sup> This translation of the Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service law is my translation from the the wording repeated in the version of the law passed in 1961: *Türk Silahlı İç Hizmetler Kanunu* No. 211, January 4, 1961, Article 35. (from <http://www.hukuki.net/kanun/211.14.text.asp>)



the website of the General Staff, warning of military action to protect secularism should the government insist on Abdullah Gül's candidacy in the parliamentary elections, resulted in the Justice and Development Party's (AKP, *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) victory.

The coup threat seemed no longer credible and the military's prestige further eroded as in 2008 many retired and active high-ranking commanders were tried under allegations of being involved in the Ergenekon case (Gürsoy 2012, 194) for planning military coups to overthrow the AKP-led government. In 2013 article 35 was amended, fundamentally altering the military's core identity as the guardian of the of the Turkish Republic, by removing the legal and moral justification to intervene in domestic politics. The mission of the TAF was redefined as defense against external enemies and its actions brought under the control of the parliament.<sup>2</sup> The official narrative of the failed military coup on 15 July 2016, is that it was instigated by the Gülen Organization (GO), aiming to overthrow the ruling party, the Justice and Development Party (AKP, *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*). The AKP and GO had previously been allied against the military-bureaucratic secular establishment in Turkey, until corruption investigations against AKP members in 2013 caused a split (Yilmaz and Bashirov, 2018, 7). The service law was amended in 2013 and the phrase, "to protect and safeguard the Turkish homeland and the Turkish Republic"

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<sup>2</sup> The wording in the current version of the law passed in 2013: "The mission of the Armed Forces is to defend Turkish territory against the foreign-borne threats and dangers; to ensure that the military strength is maintained and strengthened to ensure deterrence; to carry out the missions abroad assigned by the decision of Grand National Assembly of Turkey, and to assist in ensuring international peace." "Turkish Armed Forces". 2013. *Tsk.Tr.* <https://www.tsk.tr/Sayfalar?viewName=Mission>.

The analysis of the influence of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF, *Tzva ha Hagana Le-Yisrael, Tzahal*) in politics is more challenging, as the guardianship role of the military is not constitutionally sanctioned, therefore the assumption of a military tutelage is not as straightforward as in Turkey. The high level of external threats allowed the IDF to exert significant influence in decision-making but neither has it transform the country into a “garrison state” ruled by military authorities (cf. Lasswell 1941), nor has there been any military coup attempted. Compared to other democracies, the military’s influence is significant, and the electorate generally accepts that military officers have always played an important role in shaping the political decision (Kamrava 2000, 71). Settlement policy was a security issue, and therefore the IDF was directly involved. The IDF’s role in the administration of the settlements had been important during the state-building process, but it also had the effect of expanding its political role. Peri (1981, 310) argues that there was no clear constitutional basis that subordinated the military to civilian authority. The administration of the settlements by military governors who represent the Ministry of Defense but are also responsible to the Chief of Staff’s senior adviser in issues of the occupied territories became part of the power struggle between the civilian and military leaderships and the implementation of security policies was further complicated by partisanship issues (Peri 1981, 309). However, the IDF’s involvement in administering the settlements had the effect of expanding the role of the military in society, legitimizing its indirect military interventions in politics (Ben-Eliezer 1995, 272). Post-retirement, military officers have served as Prime Minister, Defense Minister and taken other key government posts, able to capitalize of the formation of close relations with Israeli society.

The permeability between the civilian and military leadership is partly also reflected in the Basic Laws. In Israel, section 3b of the 1976 Basic Law stipulates that the army is “subject to government authority and subordinate to the minister of defense”, yet in section 3c, “the chief of the general staff is appointed by the government upon the recommendation of the minister of defense.”<sup>3</sup> The roles and responsibilities of the political and military leaderships are not clearly delineated, as the wording in the current version of the law passed in 1976 implies that the appointment of the CGS establishes also a parallel line of responsibility to the Prime Minister and creates the conditions for a power struggle between the CGS and the Defense Minister (Ben-Meir 1995, 31). Peri (1983, 131) argues that the opinion of the CGS is decisive in the promotions and the appointment of the high-ranking generals, as the recommendations by the CGS are always approved by the Defense Minister, but as there is no formal written procedure, any decision depends on the relations between the CGS and the Defense Minister. Thus, promotions and appointments of the senior officers have been an issue over which the military has struggled to maintain institutional autonomy and political elites have struggled to protect their authorities.

A military coup d'état usually refers to military rule as a result from military coercion for government changes. Military influence and coercion in politics does not always result in direct military rule, but in the displacement of the existing civilian leadership and the installation of a new civilian government supported by the military. The term ‘direct military intervention’ will be used to describe both military takeovers that result in direct military rule and the displacement of a civilian government by another civilian government, as it facilitates the comparison of the type of the military’s intervention in Israel and Turkey.

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<sup>3</sup> 2003. Knesset.Gov.II. [https://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/basic11\\_eng.htm](https://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/basic11_eng.htm).

Israel and Turkey have two of the strongest armies in the Middle East that are considered important political actors that have contributed to the state-building process. The discussion in the following chapters does not focus as much on why the militaries in Israel and Turkey have come to possess strong political roles but seeks explanations for the different manifestations of that pervasive military influence. The main purpose of that this thesis is to explain how strong military influence in political issues has resulted in direct military interventions in Turkey but not in Israel.

Turkey and Israel have certain similarities accounting for different types and levels of military intervention in politics. Both armies defended the independence of their countries and became major actors during the state-building process. The TAF inherited traditions from the Ottoman army, and IDF from the Haganah, the military underground of the Jewish community during the British Mandate in Palestine. The founding leaders, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey and David Ben-Gurion in Israel, exerted strong civilian control over the military leadership on civil-military relations ensuring military subordination to the civilian leadership. Both Israel and Turkey have multi-party systems and political institutions that allow meaningful input from the electorates (Kamrava, 2000).

To account for differences in the consolidation of democracy in Israel and Turkey, this study focuses on the military's participation in politics during the state-building period. The single-party era in Turkey (1923-1946) was formative in establishing the role of the military as the protector of the state, but most importantly of the regime. The party created by Kemal Mustafa Atatürk, the Republican People's Party (CHP, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi) was based on a coalition

of military and civil bureaucrats, which also founded the Turkish Republic. Protection of the regime became synonymous to state unity and survival, and opposition parties were outlawed within months of their formation.

During the single-party period civilian supremacy was established over the military, as civilian leaders had close personal ties to military leadership and the army was the spearhead of economic and political reforms (Harris, 1965). Transition to a multi-party electoral system proved problematic, as coalition governments attempted to marginalize the political role of the military. Repeated clashes between civilian and military authorities resulted in the military trying to consolidate its protector status after each direct intervention, and the civilian leaders increasingly accommodating demands of political groups that the Kemalist elite would not tolerate in a government coalition (Cook 2007, 126-127).

The military in Israel emerged from the consolidation of the military underground organizations of the Jewish community in the British Mandate of Palestine, the Haganah, the Irgun and the Lehi, into the IDF, and solidified its role as state protector through victories in the battlefields that achieved independence (Yariv 1985, 108). The military branches of the Lehi and Irgun organizations were dissolved under the leadership of Haganah in the IDF and competition migrated to the political party system. The Labor movement (Mapai, *Workers' Party of the Land of Israel*) was voted out of power for the first time in 1977. Unlike Turkey, the military and civilian leadership did not adhere to a single political ideology, nor did the military seek to impose any institutional ideology on the civilian leadership. The military instead imported ideologies developed in the civilian sphere, an indication of the military's subordination to the state and acceptance of the legitimacy of civilian authorities.

This thesis argues that the role of the military in the early state-building period determined future military influence in domestic politics. In Israel and Turkey perception of security threats necessitated the participation of military officers in politics. In both cases there have been ambiguities in the basic law defining the responsibilities of civilian and military actors, which are limited as the military overall adheres to the principle of civilian control (Yariv 1985,110). Both the TAF and the IDF were considered the strongest institutions during the state-building period (Fisher 1963; Halpern 1963) that could carry out reforms and promote economic development. During the Single-Party era in Turkey (1923-1946), the Kemalist coalition between military officers and state bureaucrats abolished opposition parties that challenged Kemalist ideology. The transition to multiparty politics and the ascendance of parties that sought to marginalize the Kemalists prompted military intervention to secure the military's political role and uphold the founding principles of the state. Despite the interventions, observably, the balance of power has shifted in favor of the civilian leadership. During the Labor Party's political hegemony in Israel, the competition between the ideologically diverse military underground organizations was transferred to the multi-party system. In Israel, political disputes between the civilian and military elites have been settled through political institutions as officers have access to government through political parties. In sum, democratic culture in Israel is more consolidated. In the following section, an overview of the literature on the sub-field of civil-military relations, as well as on civil-military relation on and Turkey and Israel specifically will be presented.

## **2. Literature Review**

The main trends that dominate literature on civil-military relations were set in the 1950s and 1960s and scholars have ever since been compelled to engage with Huntington (1957) and Janowitz's (1964) interpretations of the relationship between military professionalism and civilian control. Modernization approaches on militaries in the developing world (Halpern 1963; Fisher 1963; Shils 1966) were overall dismissive of the notion that military professionalism would enhance civilian control by depoliticizing the armed forces. In the developing world the military institution was the only actor that could introduce political change. Professionalism could increase the institutional autonomy and internal cohesion of the military by constructing a sense of corporate identity and encourage military intervention (Abrahamson 1972; Finer 1962; Nordlinger 1976; Perlmutter 1977). Corporate interests also dictated military withdrawal in South America and Southern Europe in the 1980s and facilitated transition to democracy

Technological developments in warfare necessitated increased interaction between the civilian and the military sector, yet scholars are divided as to whether civil-military convergence will result in the civilianization of the military (Ginsburgh 1964; Lang 1973a, 197 b; Zuckerman 1962) or the militarization of the civilians (Ben-Eliezer 1995; Laswell 1962; Perlmutter 1968). Segal et al. (1974) maintained that high levels of convergence between the civilian and the military sector would instead decrease interaction.

Concordance theory attempted to displace the hypothesis that maintained the separation of the civil and military spheres is essential to civilian control, proposing instead a partnership model between the political and military leadership (Schiff, 1995; Narli 2000). Organizational unity and

internal cohesion remained the measure that determined military propensity to intervene (Brooks 2008; Feaver 1999; Lee 2005; O'Donnell 1986) and became the object of target by civilian leadership to marginalize the political power of the military and prevent military takeovers (Belkin & Schofer 2003; Brooks 2013; De Bruin 2018; Powell 2012, Quinlivan 1999). In the following chapter the review of the literature is mainly presented chronologically, in an effort to trace the emergence and development of trends in academic research.

## **2.1 Modernization Theory**

Questions of why militaries intervene in politics and what factors explain the military coup d'état phenomenon are not new to the scholarly literature. The predominant role of the military in the post-World War II decolonization and national independence movements in the developing world inspired a first wave of research and publications in the 1960s and 1970s. The militaries in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia had been the recipient of European powers' training and monetary assistance (Johnson 1963, Thompson 1974a, 1974b) and already exerted considerable influence in the government (Fisher 1963; Rostow 1963). Representative institutions were often externally imposed, so the military was viewed as a sufficiently modernized force that retained a hierarchical structure and respect for tradition with which societies unfamiliar with the notion of civic or political participation could identify (Halpern 1963, 288; Shils 1962, 31). As the strongest institution at the birth of a new nation, the army served as a citizenship identifier and through the process of acculturation facilitated the creation of national and political awareness (Halpern 1963, 291; Pye 1962, 83). Simply put, in developing countries the military not only spearheaded economic reforms but could also potentially set the foundations for the creation of political institutions (Halpern 1963; Pauker 1959; Pye 1962; Shils 1962).



## 2.2 Military Professionalism

The patterns of interaction between civil and military institutions in newly independent states observed in that first wave of scholarship contradicted the dichotomy that Samuel Huntington had identified in the 1950s as a distinctive feature of civil-military relations in Western democracies in the seminal work *Soldier & the State*. Huntington (1957) examines the institution of the military in Western liberal democracies and argues that professionalization and subsequent de-politicization of the military is required to establish and maintain objective civilian control. Civilian control over the military can be subjective, which is described as the “*minimization of military power through the maximization of civilian power*” or objective, described as “*militarizing the military and making it the tool of the state*” (Huntington 1957, 80-3). Objective control is achieved by “*maximizing military professionalism,*” which would eventually reduce the influence of the military in politics, allowing it to focus on security related issues while subordinated to civilian authorities. Subjective control occurs in totalitarian systems whereby the civilian leadership’s propensity to intervene in the military engenders the politicization of the army, binding the interests of the officers to those of the civilian regime Huntington (1957, 80-3).

Morris Janowitz (1964, 234) rejected the thesis that depoliticization of the army can be achieved through labor division and professionalization, arguing that what can be identified and should be desired as “partisan neutrality” in the officer corps should not mean that officers are politically neutral as well. Other scholars also argued that an increase in the security expertise of military officers does not assure their de-politicization (Abrahamson 1972; Welch and Smith 1974). Examining developing states, Janowitz (1964, 27-9) argued that the organizational structure

of the military allowed it to maintain control over the ‘instruments of violence’ and therefore enabled it to intervene in politics more readily than civilians. High internal cohesion and organizational unity increased the likelihood of military intervention (Janowitz 1977, 105; Welch and Smith 1974, 14). Huntington (1957, 2) argues that civilian control of the military is a function of the domestic institutions of a state and its security imperatives. Consequently, the development and maintenance of high standards of military professionalism within the officer corps depends not only upon threats to the state’s security, but also on its political and social institutions (Huntington 1977, 7). For Huntington, any political system that enforces the ideology of the civilian regime on the military is in “the state of a latent crisis” (Ibid). Welch and Smith (1974, 3) also argued that domestic civilian institutions that can channel political participation affect the military’s propensity to intervene in politics.

The military professionalism hypothesis remained influential in scholarly research on civil-military relations throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The “objective civilian control” model put forth by Huntington could endanger civilian control (Finer 1962, 23-30), as increased professionalism of the military might encourage and facilitate intervention when the officers were disenchanted by government politics. Finer (1962, 30) argued that “the firm acceptance of civil supremacy” ensured military subordination to political leadership. Welch and Smith (1974, 18) further argued that technological advances and high standards of professionalism would lead to greater autonomy of the military and reinforce any political ambitions.

Subjective civilian control over the military was effectively achieved through political indoctrination (Van Doorn 1969) rather than coercion (Huntington 1957, 80-3). Van Doorn (1969,

20) argues that in the subjective civilian control model, politicization of the armed forces does not inhibit the development of military professionalism but enables the civilian regime to control it. Other scholars argue that professionalism and autonomy in the military could enhance politicization, as the boundaries between the military and political spheres become permeable (Abrahamson 1972; Perlmutter 1977). Larson (1973, 65-6) argued that the major problem in the military professionalism thesis is that while many of the characteristics of professionalism such as organization, extensive education, a code of ethics and enforcement mechanisms, social responsibility and sense of community are present in the officer corps, autonomy is absent. As any decisions regarding recruitment, education, performance and other professional matters are made by civilians or taken under external civilian control, the military lacks real autonomy (Smith 1966, 202).

## **2.3 Bureaucratization**

The professionalism thesis based primarily on military expertise emphasized civil-military differences but did not capture the non-conflictual nature of relationships between civilian and military leaderships. Janowitz (1965) observed changes in the technology of warfare due to the increasing convergence of military and civilian skill requirements. Zuckerman (1962, 254) argued that the more technology a weapons system contains, the more likely it is to have been the result of civilian rather than military thinking. Ginsburg (1964, 257-9) projected that the arms race would force the military to depend heavily on civilian sectors in order to pursue their professions and gradually erode the military's authority over its affairs.

Lang (1973) claimed that the logistic requirements of modern weapons necessitated coordination among civilian and military sectors, noting that joint activities increased the exposure of the military to civilian organizational structures. Cooperation with the civilian sector compelled the military to adopt civilian structures to project the image of professionalism as other institutional sectors (Lang 1973, 16). Diversification of the occupational structure as the demand of civilian skills requirement increased would result in its bureaucratization, a trend that Lang identifies toward civilianization (Ibid 17). Professionalism was therefore the result of the civilianization of the military as it is forced to rely more on the civilian sector (Lang 1973; Zuckerman 1962). Janowitz (1971, 21) maintained that "the narrowing distinction between military and nonmilitary bureaucracies can never result in the elimination of fundamental organizational differences".

## **2.4 Civil-Military Convergence**

Civil-military convergence might be the outcome of civilian input in technological developments in the military, and positions that the equilibrium could favor either side were developed. Scholars identified the convergence between the civilian and the military as the civilianization of the military institutions (Lang 1973, 16-7; Biderman and Sharp, 1968,397). Laswell's (1962) advanced his original 'garrison state' hypothesis whereby the soldiers as "specialists on violence are the most powerful group in society" (1941, 455) and argued that the development of new technologies in warfare meant that the risk of being a civilian in wartime was almost the same as that of being a soldier. Technological development would result in the dominance of the military in any merged civilian and military social structure (Laswell 1962).

Segal et al (1974, 159) proposed a conceptual distinction between *structural convergence* of the civilian and military institution and *interdependence* between the institutions, arguing that a military with an organizational structure similar to that of the civilian sector organizational structure of the civilian society reduces its reliance on the civilian sector. Structural convergence does not result in increased permeability between the civil and military sector; reliance on the civilian sector and interdependence occur as long as there is difference between the organizational and occupational structures (Segal et al. 1974, 168-9). Thus, high levels of civil-military structural convergence should be followed by low levels of interaction; Israel is an exception to this model (Segal et al. 1974).

## **2.5 Corporate Grievances**

Approaches emphasizing the failure of political institutions as determinants of the military's propensity to stage coups (Huntington, 1968) fell out of favor in the late 1970s and were largely supplanted by the renewed corporate grievances hypothesis (Needler, 1975; Nordlinger 1976; Perlmutter 1977). Finer (1962, 31) had already argued that a military's disposition to intervene in politics is influenced by the military's perception of the national interest, corporate self-interest, social self-interest and individual self-interest. More than often national interest served as a justification to advance the corporate or self-interest of the military, as preservation of autonomy is identified as the major motivation for military interventions (Finer 1962, 41). The objective conditions taken into account before a military intervention are referred to as opportunities to intervene and include domestic circumstances, the military's popularity as well as the military's reliance on the civilian sector (Ibid 63).

Needler (1975, 71) argues that militaries are more prone to intervene on behalf of the national interest when convinced that non-intervention is a threat to the institution of the military, that is when their corporate interest is at stake. Nordlinger (1976, 78) argues that “the great majority of coups are partly, primarily, or entirely motivated by the defense or enhancement of the military’s corporate interests.” Military corporatism is defined as the protection and advancement of the military’s own interest, and the military aims to control its internal affairs and budget by preventing civilian institutions from gaining control and amass responsibilities that ensure the continuation of the institution (Ibid 65). Nordlinger (1976, 64) considers the loss of a civilian government’s legitimacy as a pretext for military intervention, as it offers justification to further the military’s corporate interests and individual ambitions of the officers. Nordlinger (1976, 78) claims that corporate interests are more frequently jeopardized by civilian governments, suggesting that once a government controlled by the coup makes is installed, its primary aim would be to protect and advance military interests. This view fails to consider that military coups are often the product of broader coalitions with civilian groups that increase the officers’ reliance on non-military politicians and bureaucrats postcoup, making the advancement of any corporate interests inherently difficult.

Perlmutter (1977, xiv) assumes a similarly uniform view of the military’s corporate interests and advances Needler’s and Nordlinger’s argument, claiming that corporativism and not professionalism determines a military’s propensity to intervene in politics. As in Van Doorn’s (1969) assessment of the subjective civilian control model whereby politicization is not a perversion but rather the rule that underscore military professionalism, Perlmutter (1977, 312-3) does not view military professionalism as incompatible with corporatism, but maintains that

professionalism, which is defined as “the acquisition and manipulation of skill,” will produce an occupational orientation in the military, the degree to which it’s committed will influence any decision to intervene in politics. Jencks (1982, 12-3) points out that Perlmutter’s (1977, 312-3) definition of professionalism is in fact expertise, which would explain why he views the military as a group possessing highly specialized skills that seeks to maintain professional autonomy.

Huntington (1977, 7) argued that the political orientation of the society determined both the military’s ability to maintain high standards of professionalism and its disinclination to intervene. For Huntington that outcome was best achieved should the society demonstrate pro-military conservatism. Perlmutter (1969, 205) identified the “revolutionary” soldier as a professional or expert officer that lacked corporatist inclinations to intervene, unlike the other types of modern officers in his classification, the “classical professional” and the “praetorian.” Perlmutter (Ibid 35-7) argues that the Israeli army officers are considered “revolutionary,” as the professional army demonstrated ideological commitment to the party doctrine which emphasized the notion of the people’s army.

Derived from the corporate grievance hypothesis but diverging from Nordlinger’s (1976) military corporatism theory, academic research during the 1980s and early 1990s largely focused on the successful democratic transitions occurring throughout Southern Europe and Latin America. Scholars argued that the civilian elites and armed forces deemed the continuation of authoritarian rule harmful to their respective corporate interests (Fitch 1998; Heper 1985, 1991; Heper and Güney 1996; Hunter 1995, 1998; O’Donnell et al. 1986; Pion-Berlin 1992, Ruhl 1996).

Military rule in South America had produced a series of failed policies and corrupt practices that no longer served the purpose of the military institutions themselves. As a result, many officers rejected the guardian role of the military and preferred to dissociate themselves from authoritarian legacies, avoiding coup behavior (Fitch 1998). Pion-Berlin (1992, 82) argues that the pursuit of individual and corporate ambitions resulted in military failures that produced an identity crisis among the officer corps.

The erosion of military stature in countries like Argentina, Peru and Uruguay facilitated democratic transition and compromise with civilian politicians (O'Donnell et al. 1986, 18-20). Heper (1991, 16-20) argues that in Turkey, the military had acted “without any allies in civil society,” and that interventions initiated by the Kemalist military and bureaucratic elite aimed to consolidate their corporate interests (Heper 1985, 87-8). Transition to civilian rule in the 1980s was facilitated by the coup leaders' decision not to obstruct competitive elections, even if the victory of Turgut Özal's Motherland Party challenged the political order the military intervened in order to defend (Heper and Güney 1996, 630).

## **2.6. Israel: Civil-military Convergence**

The resurgence of the convergence theory in literature largely aimed to explain civil-military relations in Israel (Ben-Eliezer 1995, 1997, 1998; Etzioni-Halevy 1996; Horowitz 1982; Kamrava 2000; Lissak 1998; Peri 1981, 1983). Kamrava's (2000, 70-3) approach is indicative of the trend, as he cites Israel and Turkey as “military democracies,” whereby militaries with strong corporate identities and pervasive influence in politics assumed the role of integrating the societies they served. Horowitz (1982, 77) rejected Laswell's (1962) ‘garrison state’ hypothesis in favor of



a “civilianized military in a partially militarized society,” identifying the multiparty system principles as a major factor that affected the civilianization of the IDF. Perlmutter (1968, 643) had earlier argued that the army’s dependence upon the reserve system militarized the society through the integration of veterans into civilian roles. Horowitz (1982, 77) suggested that the large number of civilian reservists in Israel introduced civilian values into the military and ensured the subordination of soldiers to civilian structures.

Lissak (1998) argued the partial militarization of society did not reduce civilian control of the military. Ben-Eliezer (1995; 1997; 1998) advanced Laswell’s (1962) argument on threats that increasingly target civilian and soldiers alike. Any partially militarized society would eventually become fully militaristic, as military affairs and war threat becomes the concern of the citizens. The term ‘cultural militarism’ is used to describe a society for which “war is a central, desirable, effective, legitimate and necessary solution to the political problems that vitiate relations between states or nations” (Ben-Eliezer 1998, 319). That being said, IDF’s “inordinate influence” on political decisions, as it determines military doctrines, has never constituted a “praetorian” threat against civilian leadership (Ben-Eliezer 1997, 9). Peri (1983a, 86) describes the relations between the civil and military establishment as that of a political-military “partnership” that displays patterns of convergence and divergence. The acquisition of direct political roles in the administration of the occupied territories by the military leaders increased the direction of convergence toward militarization (Peri 1981, 303-4). Etzioni-Halevy (1996) also argues that the practice of military officers being catapulted into politics after retirement may benefit communication and coordination between civilian and military leaderships and facilitate convergence but does not detract from the democratic quality. In our discussion of the earlier

theoretical approaches on civil-military convergence, scholars expected that high levels of civil-military structural convergence would limit interaction of the civilian and the military sector, as it would reduce the military's dependence on the civilian sector. The persistence of high levels of interaction despite structural convergence would suggest that Israel at that time remained an exception to the model proposed by Segal et al. (1974).

## **2.7 Threat Environment**

Scholars in the 1980s and 1990s renewed their interest on the effect of internal and external threats on civil-military relations, re-examining Huntington's (1957, 2) argument that internal and external security imperatives determined the level of civilian control of the military. Horowitz (1982, 77) claims that civil-military relations in Israel are unique case, due to external threat to its security stemming from the multiple and protracted conflicts with Arab states.

Desch (1999) argues that threat perceptions are major determinants of military interventions, finding that external and internal threats to the state produce different outcomes in civil-military relations. External threats target the state and the citizens, levelling divisions between the military and the civilian, and uniting against the common external danger (Desch 1999, 12-3). Internal threats, depending on the source may result in the direct intervention of the military, either to support the regime, or to install a different civilian or military leadership (Ibid). Strong civilian control of the military is observed when the state perceives high external and low internal threats. Civilian control is weak, and the military tends to launch coup d'états when the state perceives low external but high internal threats to its security (Ibid 13-4). Desch does not

account for the effect of high external threat perceptions on the military's indirect interventions, suggesting that the absence of military takeovers defines stable civil-military relations.

## **2.8 Turkey: Historical Legacies**

Literature on Turkish civil-military relations mainly explored the impact of historical legacies (Cook 2007; Güney 2002; Harris 1965, 1988; Heper 1991, 1992, 2011; Heper and Güney 1996, 2000, 2004; Kamrava 2000; Karabelias 1999; Narli 2000) on the military's propensity to intervene. The Ottoman historical legacy of resolving state disputes through military action continued until the Republican era, allowing the military to maintain a dominant role in government and in the society (Narli 200, 108). Güney (2002, 162-3) and Harris (1988, 180-1) further add the Turkish War of Independence and the personal influence of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk to the historical legacies that shaped the behavior of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) in the Turkish Republic and informed the guardianship role of the military. Karabelias (1999, 142) argues that the Kemalist elite that dominated politics in the Turkish republic inherited the traditions of the military-bureaucratic coalition that ruled the Ottoman empire, resuming the political and military modernization process already underway during the 19th century to prevent foreign intervention in domestic affairs. The Turkish military thus perceives itself as the guardian of the state and has intervened to safeguard the secular Turkish Republic against internal and external threats according to its foundational Kemalist principles (Heper and Güney 2000, 637; 2004, 183).

Cook (2007, 101) and Kamrava (2000, 74) argue that the commitment to uphold the secular character of the Turkish republic and the military's threat perceptions to internal security from Islamist-oriented political parties in any ruling coalition, affected the TAF's decisions to intervene

directly in domestic politics to reinstate political stability. Kamrava (200, 73) argues that the historical role of the Turkish military has thus been that of an arbitrator (Perlmutter 1981, 25), as its withdrawals after interventions demonstrate that the main interest is to defend the political and social order and not to assume military rule. Narli (2000, 120) argues that military interventions increased when weak civilian governments were unable to resolve disagreements with the armed forces. Contrary, military influence in politics declined when strong disagreements between the political and military leadership were absent and the civilian government effectively “maintained political stability” (Ibid).

## **2.9 Civil-military Concordance**

Scholarly research in the sub-field of civil-military relations remained engaged with Huntington’s (1957) military professionalism hypothesis. Cizre (1997, 152) argued that professionalism, while increasing the institutional autonomy of the TAF, did not decrease the military’s propensity to intervene in political affairs. The Turkish military had institutional autonomy, controlling the recruitment, military education, and promotion of junior personnel, as well as the enforcement mechanisms. The development and adherence to the Kemalist doctrine in the military allowed the TAF to maintain its political autonomy and resulted in military interventions in politics (Ibid). Historical legacies assisted the construction of the guardianship role of the military in the Turkish Republic, and the TAF was able to retain its influence on politics by evoking constitutional reasons and maintain its institutional autonomy (Ibid, 153). The TAF’s political autonomy stems from its commitment to Kemalist principles, and their determination to ensure that post-coup power transition occurred through democratic means, showed the legitimacy of the civilian rule (Ibid).

The understanding of civil-military relations as a partnership between the political and civilian leaderships characterized by periods of high and low disagreement (Narli, 2000) is based on Schiff's (1992, 1995) concordance hypothesis. Schiff (1995,8) argues that the dominant separation theories in civil-military relations literature, such as Huntington's "objective civilian control" were dismissive of historical or cultural reasons that prevented the separation of civilian and military spheres. Israel and India are cited as cases where the absence of military intervention in the form of a military takeover and respect for civilian authority is not attributed to institutional autonomy and separation (Schiff 1992, 8; 1995, 17-21). The likelihood of military intervention is decreased because of the agreement that exists between the civilian and the military leadership on the social composition of the officer corps, political decision-making process, recruitment method and military style (Schiff 1995, 14-6).

## **2.10 Organizational Motives**

Huntington's association of military professionalism and depoliticization conflicts with empirical evidence on officer corps' political activism (cf. Cizre 1997; Perlmutter 1969; Schiff 1992) yet his assertion that high standards of military professionalism require subordination to civilian authority (Huntington 1957, 79) is accepted as the "the ethic that governs the relationship between civilians and the military" and determines the military's propensity to intervene (Feaver 1999, 226; Finer 1962; Fitch 1998). Research on the impact of the organizational structure of the military on military intervention advanced Finer's (1962) and Janowitz's (1964, 1977) arguments that organizational unity and internal cohesion increased the military's political strength (Brooks 2008; Lee 2005; O'Donnell 1986). Lee (2005, 84) argues that internal cohesion in a unit or

organization, designed to reinforce commitment of each member to each other and the group's mission, affects the military's capacity to intervene in domestic politics.

Organizational unity is a measure of the extent to which corporate interests are perceived and defined by the officer corps (Nordlinger, 1976) and internal consensus allows the military leadership to present a united front that can exert more pressure on the ruling coalition (Brooks 2008, 31-32). Differences in perception to what constitutes a threat to the institutional interests of the military impedes internal cohesion and decreases the likelihood of a direct military intervention (Lee 2005, 96). Empirical evidence on Africa conflict with the internal cohesion hypothesis. Kposowa and Jenkins (1993) demonstrate that factionalized militaries are more coup prone. They find that internal cleavages and factional loyalties in the militaries in African states, stemming from grievances regarding staffing policies during colonial administration, have created tensions within the military establishment that manifest through frequent coup d'états (Kposowa and Jenkins 1993, 863-4).

## **2.11 Civil-military Bargaining**

Mutually exclusive approaches seem to have fallen out favor in literature. Rather than testing every hypothesis against the ideal of non-permeable borders between the civilian and military spheres, scholars have viewed periods of political stability as an indication of successful bargaining between the civil and military leadership (Brooks 2008, Cook 2007) and have synthesized multiple approaches to understand the breakdown of agreements. Military coup d'états are considered bargaining failures, as settlement of disputes between the political and military leadership are costly (Svolik, 2012). Political leaders may therefore attempt to undermine the

military's organizational unity and internal cohesion by selectively empowering parts of the military establishment (Kandil 2012) or addressing military grievances in a unit and not a corporate level, by bilateral negotiations (Stacher, 2012). Other coup-proofing strategies involve counterbalancing units within the military and security sector (Belkin & Schofer 2003; De Bruin 2018; Powell 2012, Quinlivan 1999a, 1999b) or encouraging factionalism within the military by stacking it with allied ethnic or sectarian groups (Roessler 2016; Quinlivan 1999b). Powell (2012, 1033) distinguishes between attempted and successfully executed military coup d'états and finds limiting organizational resources for the military while building up paramilitary forces reduces the likelihood of a successful coup. Scholars also explore the interaction between multiple state actors dealing with repression in non-democratic states, such as the military, the police and the security sector (Brooks 2013, Kandil 2012) to understand how conflicting interests may undermine internal cohesion and prompt military defections.

Finer (1962) and Huntington (1957) agreed that military professionalism underlined the ethic that determined military subordination to civilian authority and the military's propensity to intervene. For Huntington (1977) security threats to the state and domestic political institutions shaped military ethic and thus the nature of civil-military relations. Welch and Smith's (1974) thesis that civilian institutions offer opportunities for political participation also contribute to this comparative analysis between Israeli and Turkish civil military relations. The concept of state autonomy, defined as a characteristic of a modern political system that is insulated from the impact of non-political groups and procedures (Huntington 1968, 20) is vital to understand the impact of political institutions. According to Huntington, a political organization that is the instrument of a particular social group, family or class lacks autonomy. Thus, political parties are the most

important instruments to create a modern and autonomous polity, as they most successfully aggregate and overcome narrow interest. The assumption underlying this statement is that in a modern political system, parties do not express interests of certain groups in a manner that would present them as general interests. Political parties provide multiple outlets for the political participation of a non-political group such as the military to exert influence and thus should reduce military propensity to intervene.



### **3. Methodological Approach**

This study is a comparison between the historical paths of the military in Turkey and Israel aiming to identify the conditions that prompted direct military intervention in one case. Historical institutionalism, neither a fully-fledged history nor a fully developed method but rather an approach (Steinmo 2008, 118), is helpful in identifying critical junctures in history when political decisions taken in a time-period shaped decisions in the future. Critical junctures are brief time-periods during which political actors are able to create and define political institutions according to their interests. Wars, financial crises, military coups etc. are generally considered as critical junctures (Collier and Collier 1991, 31).

At the core of historical institutionalism is that politics should not be studied in a historical vacuum, as focus on the historical origins of institutions facilitates the understanding of future political decisions and institutional relationships. Institutions are the formal organizations and rules that shape political behavior. As governance occurs through formal institutions such as states, parliaments, political parties, constitutions, international organizations and many others, studying their differences assists our understanding of the behavior of political actors. Though institutions are important in shaping political decisions, they are not considered the “sole cause of outcomes” (Thelen and Steinmo 1992, 3). Once institutions are created, a self-reinforcing process is initiated that is very difficult to reverse. The concept of path dependence essentially means that that “what happened at an earlier point in time will affect the possible outcomes of a sequence of events occurring at a later point in time” (Sewell 1996, 262-63). That is, the creation of an institution sets off a process designed to reinforce the institution, making political alternatives unacceptable.

## **4. Case Selection and Hypothesis**

While the focus of this study remains on the explanatory value of political institutions as a major determinant of military interventions, historical institutionalism allows the investigation of the interaction between variables to compare civil-military relations in Israel and Turkey. Despite their deficiencies, Israel and Turkey remain relatively the most democratic states in the Middle East, yet by merely considering their political systems, it is difficult to account for the different types of military influence and intervention in politics. For that reason, some key concepts from Historical Institutionalism, such as critical junctures, help trace the development of civil-military relation and explain the occurrence of phenomena such as military coups. Still, the formation of a working hypothesis which argues that principles and institutions adopted during state formation influence future political decisions is useful:

H: The greater the influence of the military on decision-making during the state building period, the greater that influence is likely to be in the future.

Turkey and Israel have certain similarities that explain their militaries' pervasive influence in politics and differences that explain the types and levels of military intervention in politics and identifying critical junctures will indicate how shifts in the balance of civil-military relations occurred. Both armies defended the independence of their countries and became major actors during the state-building process. The TAF inherited traditions from the Ottoman army, and IDF from the Haganah, the military underground of the Jewish community during the British Mandate in Palestine, which they carried into the new state. The founding fathers of Turkey and Israel, Atatürk and Ben-Gurion respectively, had a profound impact on civil-military relations, as they

emphasized absolute military subordination to the civilian leadership and enacted laws accordingly. In both countries, military influence has overall been accepted by the society, as the military officers are generally admired (Heper and Itzkowitz-Shiffrinson 2005, 232).

In Turkey, continuing military interventions have raised criticism against the military. Similarly, public criticism against the wars that Israel has initiated, especially since the 1982 Lebanon War, has increased. The marginalization of the military's role in domestic politics the past decade may indicate that public perception has had an impact on civil-military relations. The 2016 military coup attempt in Turkey failed and civilian control of the military seems to be reconsolidated by the AKP around President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The first time the role of the IDF in politics was questioned by the civilian leadership in Israel was with the election of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in 1996, who was especially critical of the military's involvement in the peace process. The dislike between Netanyahu and the military was mutual, and many high-ranking reservists, among them former Chief of Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, campaigned with opposition parties to defeat Netanyahu in 1999 (Peri 2006, 80-81).

Netanyahu was defeated in 1999 but was voted again into power in 2009 and 2019. Netanyahu remained critical of the military interventions, yet unlike Erdoğan has been unable to bring about a shift in civil-military relations in Israel. There are two reasons for this, which are traced back to the state-building period. Unlike Turkey, the Israeli military does not have an institutional ideology. When disputes between civilian and military leaderships arise, political leaders will not clash with the entire military institution. More importantly, military officers can easily enter the political arena post-retirement. The dissolution of the paramilitary organizations

(Haganah, Irgun, Levi) and their consolidation of forces into a professional army did not spell the demise of their respective political wings. Political competition in Israel has been channeled through the multiparty democratic elections, and especially after the Six Days War, former officers have occupied civilian posts.

## **5. Case Study: Turkey**

### **5.1 The Founding of the Turkish Republic**

The creation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 was a major departure from the Ottoman past, as new political, legal and social institutions were formed. In other ways, the Turkish Republic evinced characteristics of the Ottoman era, such as the strong state tradition, the continuation of the political reforms that started in the Reform (*Tanzimat*) period (1839-1876) of the Ottoman Empire, and a strong army that was perceived as a modernizing force (Harris 1988; Güney 2002; Karbellias 1999; Rustow 1959). Political change in Turkey was brought about with the organization of a resistance movement by Mustafa Kemal (later called Atatürk, father of the Turks), a general and victorious commander during World War I who was sent to the interior to maintain and supervise the demobilization of the Ottoman armies. Atatürk instead collaborated with other leading army and navy officers to plan the resistance (Rustow 1968, 797). Despite being a middle-ranking military bureaucrat, the post at the War Ministry allowed him to take a personal hand in the staff work that prepared his mission.

Kemal quickly established contact with the organization of the by then defunct “Young Turk” Union and Progress Party (Rustow, 1959, 549) and established his leadership through a network of associates that coordinated regions and groups across the Ottoman Empire. Turkish troops at that time were not under close supervision from the state, yet they maintained their discipline and hierarchical chain of command, while the former Union and Progress party had built an impressive party organization that spread even to remote rural regions. Through the local party organizations led by administrative officials, intellectuals and land owners formed the civilian base

of the resistance movement; central administration bureaucrats and provincial representatives did not embrace the nationalist cause advocated by the party (Ibid 542).

Kemal organized local defense units and civilian organizations into a central organization with a representative committee (Representative Committee of the Defense Organization), transforming effectively the opposition into a counter-government that called for elections to a new National Assembly in May 1923 (Smith 1959, 31). The election order, addressed to the commanding general of the army corps, provincial administrators and governors, called for the election of five representatives from each province to attend the assembly along with the deputies from the Istanbul Parliament. The newly elected provincial delegates (232) and the deputies from Istanbul (106) together with former Ottoman members of the parliament (99) formed the first Grand National Assembly (Ibid 52).

The first Turkish Grand National Assembly was dominated by military and civil bureaucrats as evident in its composition. Government officials accounted for 43% of the 437 deputies (23% bureaucrats, 15% military officers and 5% educators), 17% were religious officials, 18% independent professionals and 13% were in banking and trading. The cultivation of the extensive network into rural regions yielded 6% of the deputies, all major landowners. The vast majority of the leadership positions in the First Assembly were occupied by military bureaucrats with university education (Ibid 53). Thus, both the movement and the party were controlled by high level bureaucrats who managed the lower officials and accommodated various interest groups (Ibid 62).

Kemal was able to obtain a decree from religious officials against the Sultan, claiming the territorial concessions of the Ottoman Empire to the Allies constituted a betrayal of the Islamic faith to Western infidels. At the same time, Kemal was able to use the occupation of Istanbul by the Allies to continue the resistance under the pretext of nationalist cause that the capitulated Sultan was unable to undertake, often combining a pro-religious and nationalist rhetoric (Rustow 1959, 545).

## **5.2 The Single-party Era (1923-1945)**

The People's Party was officially founded after the 1923 elections. Atatürk ruled under a single party until his death in 1938, and as in other revolutionary movements, so in Turkey the consolidation of democracy often required non-democratic means. Cook (2007, 15) argues that despite Kemalists' intentions to create institutions for political participation, the military officers were "high modernists" who were "inherently authoritarian" and believed that their training and skills qualified them to exercise political power. This self-concept of professionalism in the Turkish army, based on a definition of expertise, created a sense of corporatism and occupational entitlement to political power (cf. Jencks 1982 12; Perlmutter 1977, 313).

Following a brief split (1924-1925) and the formation of an opposition party, the Progressive Republican Party (TRF, *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası*) by Kemal's former associates Generals Ali Fuat Cebesoy, Kazım Karabekir and Rauf Orbay, the party was renamed as the Republican People's Party (CHP, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*). The TRF was closed down following allegations about its involvement in the Kurdish-religious Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925 (Rustow 1964, 365). The second attempt in 1930 by religious and conservative groups critical

of Kemalist reforms to form an opposition party was also short-lived. The Liberal Republican Party (SCF, *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası*) was banned three months after its creation in 1930.

The six principles of Kemalism, officially adopted in 1930 were republicanism, secularism, populism, nationalism, statism and reformism. The new Turkish state was a constitutional republic, and republicanism emphasized that Turkey as nation-state had severed ties to its imperial Ottoman past. Though the Muslim character in society was recognized, the defining character of the new state was based on the Turkish nation, and being a Turk re-emphasized the foundations of the new nation-state, concepts emphasized by secularism and nationalism (Fisher 1963, 26; Mehmet 1983, 50).

While in the Ottoman empire the major arbitrator in politics was the military higher class (Perlmutter 1981, 25), populism meant to signify that state sovereignty and legitimacy derived from the Turkish people. Statism referred to the statist economic reforms adopted in the 1930s and emphasized strong government regulation of economic activities. Finally, reformism indicated the Republic's commitment to replace traditional values and institutions in the path to modernization (Fisher 1963, 27-8).

Active military service was deemed incompatible with election to the parliament in 1924 (Rustow 1959, 545) and officers supporting the Kemalist regime resigned their commissions. The officers' exclusion from elected posts was counterbalanced by the guardianship role assigned to the military. This guardianship role was enshrined in the constitution the Article 35 of the Army Internal Service Law of 1935, where it was stated that the duty of the armed forces to defend and to protect the Turkish homeland and the Turkish Republic. The army effectively became the



protector of Kemalist reforms and the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) were thus allowed to bypass civilian control when the government did not act in the public interest (Harris 1965).

The 1923-1946 period of the Turkish Republic is characterized by a stagnation of political and military reforms in favor of economic development and social changes (Mehmet 1983) and is also referred to as the single-party period. The three most important men during this period were two former military leaders, President Kemal Atatürk (from 1923 to his death in 1938), Prime Minister Ismet Inonu (from 1923 to 1924 and 1925 to 1937), and CGS Marshal Fevzi Çakmak (from 1923 to 1944), who had close personal ties to Atatürk and enjoyed considerable autonomy over the military's internal affairs (Heper and Güney 1996, 620).

Institutions such as the Supreme Military Council were created to provide high-ranking military leaders a venue to share their concerns with the civilian leadership. This arrangement emphasized the subordination of the military to the civilian leadership, while the military was offered a form of political participation. As mentioned above, former military officers did not exceed the percentage of bureaucrats in the parliament but occupied top leadership positions in the cabinet (Smith 1959, 53). The National Defense, Internal Affairs, Public Work and Communication Ministries were occupied by former officers or Kemalist civilians (Frey 1965, 260). In fact, the first cabinet that did not include former military officers was formed by Prime Minister Hasan Saka and president Inonu in 1948 (Rustow 1959, 550). During CHP rule the officers were disinclined to engage in a power struggle with the civilian leadership, yet it is difficult to argue that effective civilian control of the military was exercised when the most leadership positions in the civilian government were occupied by former officers (Harris 1965). The Turkish military was the strongest institution at the birth of the new state, having successfully fought a war against the France, the U.K. and Greece that cancelled the territorial partition plans

outlined in the Treaty of Sèvres. As the recipient of German, and after 1918 Russian training and aid it was the only modernized force that could promote economic reforms during the initial state-building phase (Johnson 1963, Thompson 1974). The new political elite, a coalition of military officers and civilian bureaucrats, shared a political ideology that was eventually enshrined in the constitution. The CHP made Kemalism the official ideology of the Turkish Republic and the military the designated guardian of both. In practice, the military bureaucrats that dominated the CHP neither created participatory institutions, nor sought to promote professionalism in the military to depoliticize the officer corps.

During the single-party era, civil-military relations in the Turkish Republic were characterized by a cooperation between the civilian and military leadership, as key government posts were occupied by former military leaders (cf. Schiff 1995). The absence of direct military interventions in non-liberal democracies, or else open competition between the civilian and the military leadership is a characteristic of civil-military relations in party-states (Ben-Eliezer, 2014). The subjective civilian control model facilitates our understanding of civil-military relations during the single-party period. The CHP aimed to maximize its control of the state by making the TAF the guardian of the regime (cf. Huntington 1957). Promoting military professionalism while ensuring that the military remained politicized best served this purpose (cf. Van Doorn 1969). Professionalism, especially in the higher echelons did not depoliticize the officers but reinforced their corporate identity (cf. Cizre 1997; Perlmutter 1977) and created the conditions for future intervention, should there be disputes with civilian leadership (cf. Finer 1962) and corporate interests at stake (Nordlinger 1976).

The determination to uphold the political order, promote economic reforms and defend Kemalist principles inhibited the creation of democratic participatory institutions. Opposition parties that were critical of Kemalist reforms were banned. The single-party period inhibited the consolidation of democratic reforms and the development of a political alternative to solving disputes. The military's opportunity to participate in politics was through its partnership with CHP. Transition to multi-party politics could potentially reduce the political influence of the TAF, and direct military interventions aimed to prevent this outcome.

### **5.3 Multi-party politics (1946-1960)**

The Republican People's Party (CHP) remained a coalition of military and civil bureaucrats managing a centrally planned economy that was hostile to rural economic interests, unable to turn agricultural surplus to the industrialization target that was set. In order to pacify disgruntled landowners and businessmen that remained underrepresented in the parliament, the CHP had not pursued economic or land reforms. By 1945, the new generation of state and party bureaucrats was pushing for land reforms, ~~only~~ to result in the landowners leaving the CHP to form an opposition party (Harris 1970, 443). To prevent possible dissolution of the CHP, President Inonu allowed the formation of political opposition parties.

The CHP acquiescence towards a more open political system was also indicative of the confidence in the resilience of the regime, as the leaders of the newly formed Democratic Party were all former ranking members of the Republican People's Party and largely expected to share the same experiences and enact the same policies (Ibid 445). Moreover, as Turkey aimed to secure economic and military aid from the United States government, fearing potential Russian encroachment on Turkish territory, the adoption of the multi-party system was important to gain

the support of the West, which was discontented with Turkey's neutrality in the war (Harris 1972; Sadak 1949).

While in 1945 the prospect of an opposition party securing the popular vote remained distant, the overwhelming majority by which the Democratic Party (DP) won the 1950 elections threatened to turn the temporary deposition of the Republican People's Party from the seats of power to permanent. The Democratic Party, the first ruling party in Turkey whose leaders did not emerge through ties to the military, managed to maintain support throughout three general elections between 1950-60 while the CHP was reduced to a minority (Harris 1970, 441).

As the CHP was led by the interests of the civilian and military bureaucrats, the Democratic Party appeared to be equally guided by commercial and landed interests and sought to extend party control over the state apparatus and reverse policies of the formerly state-directed economy that placed restrictions on the flow of foreign capital (Karpas 1959). Whether the Democratic Party earnestly sought the support of the military is questionable, as Article 23 of the Constitution enacted in 1924 prohibited active military officers from being elected to the Parliament. Despite its promises, the Democratic Party did not promote policies that regulated the flow of foreign capital to the private sector, but rather increased state intervention in the economy in an effort to consolidate what can be identified at that point as the party's control of the state apparatus.

#### **5.4 The First Military Coup (May 27, 1960)**

By 1960, Adnan Menderes' government's legitimacy was weakened in the eyes of a significant part of the society due to the antidemocratic policies regarding separations of powers and restriction of the freedoms of speech and expression, press and association (Harris 1970, 439).

The Turkish army launched a coup in 1960 with the claim of reestablishing the constitutional order and democracy that was breached by Adnan Menderes' Democratic Party government's rule. The direct military intervention on May 27, 1960, was largely accepted by the society, particularly by the opponents of the government. The general impression was that the army acted on the belief that that Menderes government planned a return to single-party rule by abolishing the CHP (Dodd 1969, 28). Menderes' close relations with the religious and Kurdish groups were also raising concerns in the military, who viewed such political behavior as a deviation from Kemalist principles.

Adding to the concerns, the military faced the prospect of becoming a political tool to a government prepared to use the state apparatus for partisan interests. While during the single-party period there was military cooperation with the civilian elites in policymaking, there was no common ideological affiliation between the TAF and the Democratic Party to guarantee a similar arrangement. The transition to a multi-party political system in Turkey introduced a contender to the Kemalist regime for state control, and the military, as the protector of the regime and the Turkish Republic, intervened because an overturn of the political order would spell the demise of its political role.

The 1961 Constitution approved by the military dictatorship institutionalized the military's political influence through the creation of the National Security Council (Harris 2011). The council presented a legitimizing forum for the military to express its opinion on national security related issues and was composed of the Chief of General Staff (CGS), representatives of the forces, the ministers of Defense, Interior and Foreign affairs, the Prime Minister and the President. As

abovementioned, Article 23 of the first Constitution in 1924 prohibited active military officers from being elected to the Parliament. This article also prevented the CGS from participating in the government and made him responsible to the President. In 1944, the CGS was made responsible to the Prime Ministry, in the 1961 Constitution became subordinate to the Ministry of Defense and in 1982 was made responsible to the Prime Ministry once again. As of 2016, the CGS was answering directly to the President.

The multi-party system would largely remain in place with the 1961 constitutions, with elections determining the government. The reintegration of the military and Kemalists into the political system was conducted through their placement as checks and balances in state bureaucratic institutions to effectively prevent a partisan takeover of the legislative and executive branches (Harris 2011, 205) During the 1960s the military would refrain from a direct intervention in the form of a coup, yet through the constitutional reforms of 1961 retained its influence in key political issues. The military command was not satisfied with the electoral victory of the Justice Party (AP, *Adalet Partisi*), the successor to the Democratic Party in 1965 and 1969, yet it did not prevent it from forming a ruling coalition, as an abolition of a political party would be an attack against parliamentary democracy. At the same time, the military seemed committed to upholding the legitimacy of the 1960 military coup, ensuring that the military's candidate for the Presidency, Cevdet Sunay, was elected by the Parliament in 1966 (Ahmad 1977, 254).

As Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel was aware that the military would not look favorably upon the party that succeeded the Democratic Party, he accommodated the demands of the military

by offering prestigious political, bureaucratic and diplomatic ambassadorships to the military commanders, not willing to provoke the military by signaling opposition. To that purpose, in 1969 Prime Minister Demirel convinced legislators not to pass the draft granting amnesty to politicians of the Democratic Party, as the CGS Memduh Tağmaç informed President Cevdet Sunay that commanders would resign otherwise (Ibid 281).

### **5.5 Intervention by Memorandum (March 12, 1971)**

The constitutional reforms designed to prevent a political takeover of the state by a civilian government potentially resentful of the military, fostered an uneasy partnership between military and civilian leaderships through the threat of coup, and failed to produce efficient coalition governments that could re-introduce stability in the political system throughout the 1960s and 1970s. As Turkey did not remain immune to Cold War politics that often resulted in armed clashes between political groups in the communist left and nationalist right, the coalition government failed to address the threats posed to its internal security. The military held accountable the political leadership for the ongoing anarchy and issued a memorandum, forcing President Demirel's government to resign.

Unlike after the 1960s coup, the military command did not assume direct rule and along with the parliament agreed that the Prime-Minister should not have partisan affiliations, asking Nihat Erim to form the government.<sup>4</sup> The change in the political leadership of the country did not

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<sup>4</sup> Nihat Erim was a law professor and a parliament member of the CHP. He left the party at the request of the military in to form the government in 1981 and collaborated with the military to crack down on radical leftist organizations.

end internal clashes, and the imposition of martial law in eleven provinces of Turkey was deemed the only solution to repress the urban guerilla activities of radical leftist groups. Prime Minister Erim and the military command considered the constraint of political freedoms necessary to address the threat to the national security of the state.

The military intervention in 1971 neither used violence against politicians nor overthrew the government, but displaced the existing civilian leadership, replacing it with a new civilian government deemed able or inclined to facilitate the military's effort to stop the ongoing turmoil in the country. Despite the overthrow of the government by the military, the constitutional changes of 1971 restrained political rights and freedoms<sup>5</sup> and increased military indirect interventions, shifting the civil-military equilibrium towards military control. Still, the intervention of the military as the guardian of the state's unity failed to mitigate social and political unrest. Former CGS Cevdet Sunay's term as President ended in the spring of 1973 (Harris 2011, 207) presenting an opportunity for politicians to place a candidate of their choice and weaken the military influence in politics.

The politicization of the military during the era of multi-party politics ensured that partisan politics and division would bleed over to the officer corps. A feud between CGS Memduh Tağmaç, politically affiliated with the AP, and Air Force Commander Muhsin Batur, who later joined the CHP, seemed responsible for creating a stalemate in promotions and reassignments at the top of the military command, affecting also the line of candidates for the presidential seat (Ibid). The stalemate allowed the civilian leaders to express their preference for retired Admiral Fahri

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<sup>5</sup> The constitutional changes left the military out of judiciary control while strengthening the military's political role through the NSC and continuous martial laws.



Koruturk, who was considered politically neutral, as opposed to the Chief of Staff, Faruk Guler, whose candidacy was vetoed from within the officer corps. The military eventually accepted the candidate of the civilian leadership.

This incident marked a period of a strained partnership between the military and civilian leadership, as verbal threats of direct military intervention did not seem to affect political change. The civilian leadership had possibly willfully interpreted the military's acquiescing in the matter of the presidency as sign of a retreat from the politics. The reluctant partnership between the military and civilian authorities could not be expected to last long as the incentives for both partners were lost; the military could no longer credibly threaten the civilian leadership.

## **5.6 The Second Military Coup (September 12, 1980)**

The failure of the civilian government to respond effectively to the dramatic rise in political violence that was increasingly shaped by ethnic and religious politics precipitated the 1980 military coup. The military believed that the government's inability to address civil strife mirrored the political actors' disinclination to deal with internal conflicts among them (Hale 1988, 162). Amongst this chaos, the Islamist National Salvation Party (MSP *Milli Salvation Party*) of Necmettin Erbakan was able to secure enough seats in the parliament to extract concessions from the coalition in exchange for votes. Erbakan, the leader of the party from 1970, openly contended all the six principles of Kemalism were "a poor adoption of Western modernism and rationalism," (Tepe 2008, 191) and the party's ability to shape policy in education unsettled the military command, which viewed NSP's actions as more more undermining than radical leftists and ethnic Kurds, as they challenged the legitimacy of the Kemalist regime and thus by default the survival

of the Turkish Republic. Sectarian and ethnic identities further complicated ideological clashes. Until the early 1970s the Kurdish issue was assessed in terms of its leftist ideology, whereas towards the end of the decade, with the establishment of PKK and the introduction of ethnic identities, it became a separatist movement. It had become obvious by 1980 that despite the imposition of martial law, especially in the Southeastern provinces, the civilian leadership could not cooperate with the military to restore order.

The military junta that carried out the 1980 Coup banned all political activity and placed the leaders of the major political parties under detention. Unlike the 1971 coup, the military commanders did not replace the civilian leadership, but assumed direct control over state affairs as after the 1960 coup, with the intention to rewrite the Constitution in order to avoid the political deadlock of weak coalition governments, while reinstating political freedoms that had receded with the imposition of martial law in the 1970s.

Between 1960 and 1980 nineteen coalition governments had been formed. The imposition of martial law failed to prevent armed clashes between political groups and stop the violence, and the legitimacy of coalition governments gradually eroded as they were unable to restore order. A major difference between the 1960 and 1980 coups is that the takeover was not planned within a military faction but was a coordinated effort by the entire military institution. The post-coup administration configuration of the National Security Council (NSC), included five of the highest-ranking generals and was led by Chief of General Staff Kenan Evren.

The ban of all political activity aimed to prevent a return to the chaos of the previous decades by purging the political and social arena of any party official who had been active up to 1980. The liberal constitution of 1961 was replaced with a conservative 1982 constitution, and Article 68 granted the right to establish political parties with prior permission. Access to politics was restricted to new politicians and parties, as all who were members of a party formed before 1980 were banned from political activity for at least ten years. At the same time, the officers did not protest against place more restrictions on the emerging political opposition, as they were reluctant to place more restriction that would further compromise the democratization process (Cook 2007, Heper 1991). Article 69 stipulated some of the restrictions that were indicative of the officers' concerns about groups associated with ethnic or religious causes, as parties who advocated politics that “conflict with the indivisible integrity of the State with its territory and nation, and the principles of the democratic and secular republic” were prohibited (Heper 1991, 48). Moreover, to prevent the politicization of state bureaucracy, the president was granted veto powers and the right to appoint all high-ranking bureaucrats. In practice however, and despite the design of this national security state, the generals were reluctant to further compromise the legitimacy of the first post-coup elections, and despite the defeat of the new parties that had emerged under military supervision, did not contest Turgut Özal's Motherland Party (ANAP, *Anavatan Partisi*) victory (Cook 2007, 105).

The repeated military interventions had eroded the military's legitimacy and the successful transition to a multi-party democratic system was essential for the military to reconsolidate its political power (Heper 1991; Heper and Güney 1996). The decision of the military to withdraw and accommodate the opposition during the post-coup transition to democracy was instrumental

in shaping what the Kemalist civil-military bureaucratic establishment feared: the rise of a counter-elite whose identity was mainly shaped by Islam (Heper 1991, 50). Islamist movements and religious networks such as the Gulenists were able to profit from the economic liberalization policies of the Ozal administration in 1980s which sought to form broad-based coalition, contributing to the rise of the Welfare Party (RP *Refah Partisi*) in the 1990s (Öniş 1997, 757) and precipitated another confrontation between the military establishment and politicians.

### **5.7 Intervention by Memorandum: The ‘Postmodern’ Coup (February 28, 1996)**

The 1980 coup was a turning point in Turkey’s political and economic development, as the economic reforms proved critical in the growth of Islamic business and the rise of political Islam as a movement. Prime Minister Turgut Ozal promoted a "Turkish-Islamic synthesis" ideology that emphasized the Islamic identity of the Turks whose origins were traced back to the Ottoman Empire (Cook 2007, 107). The military did not protest the re-introduction of religion into the national education curriculum, most likely because they were more interested in marginalizing the communists (Kedourie 1996, 190), and permitted Islamist parties like the RP to remain active in the political arena.

The RP was the successor party to NSP and continued to reject the founding principles of the Republican regime and opposed secularism. Erbakan described RP’s ideology as the only one with a national view (*milli gorus*) and maintained that the concept of Turkish nationalism aggravated ethnic conflict in Turkey, as it undermined Muslim identity (Cook 2007, 106). Despite criticism and political opposition, the formation of a coalition government without the RP proved impossible in 1996. True Path (DYP, *Doğru Yol Partisi*) leader Tansu Ciller formed a coalition

government with the RP, making Necmettin Erbakan Turkey's first Islamist prime minister on 28 June 1996.

Erbakan's foreign policy initiatives included state visits to Iran and Libya, economic cooperation with Muslim countries and establishing close relations with Islamic groups such as the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front, the Lebanese Hezbollah Muslim Brotherhood and the Palestinian Hamas. More importantly, the solution that RP proposed to address Kurdish grievances and to end PKK violence was the promotion of the Muslim identity in order to eliminate the problem of Kurdish separatism (Cook 2007, 119). The military officers remained watchful, yet eventually joined the anti-government campaign by the media and civil society organizations (Heper and Guney 2000, 641), following the outrage against the RP's decision to shut down a corruption investigation against DYP and an incident where a female reporter, sent to cover an event organized by the RP-governed Sincan municipality, was beaten by a group of religious fundamentalists. The National Security Council (NSC) met on 28 February 1997 and declared that any "groups aiming to create an Islamic republic based on Sharia law in Turkey constitute a multi-directional threat to the democratic, secular social-law state as defined by the Constitution" (Gunay 2001, 17). A memorandum of that meeting titled NSC Decision No: 406 containing eighteen points to fight the Islamist threat, was unwillingly signed by Erbakan. Despite resistance to its implementation, the February NSC meeting set off a process whereby combined military and social pressure forced Erbakan's resignation. Turkey's Constitutional Court dissolved the RP and banned Erbakan from politics for five years (Cook 2007, 124-6).

The 1997 military intervention is referred to as the “February 28 Process” and showcases what many scholars (Güney 2002; Harris 1988; Heper 1991, 1992, 2011; Heper and Güney 2000, 2004; Karabelias 1999) considered to be a major problem in Turkish politics, the clash between the secular military establishment and Islamist political groups. However, the decision not to displace the government by a military takeover indicates the change scholars have identified on how the coup prone militaries perceived the defense of corporate and national interests during the process of democratization (Fitch 1998; Heper 1985, 1991; Heper and Güney 1996; Hunter 1995, 1998; O’Donnell et al. 1986; Pion-Berlin 1992). Moreover, it seems that unlike during the previous interventions (cf. Heper 1985, 1991), in 1997 the TAF had allies in the civil society that provided a platform to campaign against Erbakan’s government.

The disinclination to intervene by imposing military rule undermined the military’s ability to use coups as credible threats to pressure the civilian government. The presidential election of 2007, towards the end of Erdoğan’s first term, provided the setting for the next major clash between the civilian and the military leaderships. Abdullah Gül’s candidacy was vetoed by the CGS Yaşar Büyükanıt, warning the AKP by posting a memorandum on the military’s official website on April 2007 that the next president should be a secular person, otherwise the military would take action, implying a coup (Karakaya and Pusane, 2016).

Unlike Erbakan, Erdoğan had managed to establish strong relations with the USA, the EU, and the *Gülen* Organization, and had the support of the liberals and the business elite. Moreover, from 1999 the prospect of an EU membership required Turkey to align its policies with that of EU members, including harmonizing civil-military relations with European practices. Erdoğan was

able to present the AKP as a victim of military encroachment on domestic politics, aware that EU pressure placed restriction on the military's power (Gürsoy 2012). If the military had been unwilling to launch a coup in 1997 when Erbakan was in a weak position, it was highly unlikely to do so against a far more powerful Erdoğan. The AKP insisted on Gül's candidacy in their power struggle with the military, and General Büyükanıt's warning had the opposite effect: the AKP increased its votes more than 12% (Gürsoy 2012, 200). The fact that the military no longer exerted the same influence indicated a shift in the civil-military relations in Turkey and a marginalization of the TAF's political role, decreasing the likelihood of successful interventions.

In order to remove the legal base for military's direct and indirect interventions, the Parliament, in which the AKP had the majority, changed Article 35 of the Internal Service Law in 2013. The law did not specify direct military intervention, but the military interpreted the law that it was the army's responsibility and duty to protect the state against any danger even if it were the government or the society itself. At this point, the army became an arbitrator of political outcomes, deciding what and who constituted a threat to the state and the regime. With the amendment, the army would no longer deal with internal threats because it defined the role and responsibilities of the army as "the mission of the Armed Forces is to defend Turkish territory against the foreign-borne threats and dangers; to ensure that the military strength is maintained and strengthened to ensure deterrence; to carry out the missions abroad assigned by the decision of Grand National Assembly of Turkey, and to assist in ensuring international peace."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "Turkish Armed Forces". 2013. Tsk.Tr. <https://www.tsk.tr/Sayfalar?viewName=Mission>.

President Erdogan and the AKP-led government have declared the Gülen Organization responsible for the July 2015 attempted coup and have used emergency powers to arrest, prosecute or dismiss an estimated 100,000 Turkish citizens in military, civil service, education and media sectors (The Economist, 2016b). Heper (1985 87-8; 1991 16-20) argues that the military in Turkey, despite society's acceptance of the legitimacy of the interventions, lacked allies in the society to take over the state and were largely motivated out of institutional interests. In Turkey the military played an educational role and trained conscripts, facilitating their integration into the new state and society (Rustow 1964, 453). Similar to Israel, Turkey the army is composed of both these conscripts and the professional officers, however, unlike Israel, in Turkey there is no reserve service. In Turkey all male citizens have to do obligatory military service; while in Israel all male and female Israeli citizens except for Muslim Arabs and ultra-orthodox Jews have to go to the army (Cohen 1999). Heper and Itzkowitz-Shiffrinson (2005, 242) argue that toward the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and especially at the prospect of an EU membership, there is an observable increase of civilian control, which has reduced many of the responsibilities of the military. The 2013 amendment in Article 36 of the Internal Service Law stipulates that "the Armed Forces is assigned to the duty of learning and teaching art of war,"<sup>7</sup> further limiting the TAF's non-military functions. The gradual erosion of the Turkish military's responsibilities and marginalization of role in society compromised its ability both to execute a successful coup and find allies in civilian society.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid



## **6. Case Study: Israel**

### **6.1 The Haganah Period**

The Israeli military establishment developed from local paramilitary groups to a national army, the Haganah (Defense), in 1920. The Haganah was the military underground of the Jewish community, a loose federation of local militia groups operating in Palestine under the British mandate. Under the leadership of the Jewish Agency and Histadrut (General Federation of Laborers in the Land of Israel), the Haganah followed a policy of *havlaga* (restraint) against both Britain and Arabs. Within the organization operated groups such as the Irgun, led by Ze'ev Jabotinsky, that favored an offensive policy against the Arabs.

Jabotinsky died in 1940, and further division within the Jewish military underground was created with the formation of Lehi (Israel's Freedom Fighters) by Abraham Stern. The Lehi was smaller than Irgun, having a few hundred fighters, yet engaged in more violent acts and terrorist attacks against the British administration. The antagonism between the three groups was so severe that they attacked each other, burned other groups' vehicles, raided arsenals, and kidnapped and tortured the members of other groups (van Creveld 1998, 55-56). The conflict reached its height during 1944-45, when Haganah eventually arrested hundreds of Irgun and Lehi members at the request of the British authorities (Ben-Eliezer 1998, 115-28).

The struggle between the three paramilitary groups continued into the establishment of the State of Israel, as declared by David Ben-Gurion, the head of the Jewish Agency, on May 14, 1948. The political rivalry between the Haganah, the Irgun and the Lehi could complicate the transition to statehood, as multiple military forces contradicted his "one front-one authority" policy (Ibid

163). As the leaders of these paramilitary groups— Menachem Begin (Irgun), Yitzhak Shamir (Lehi) and Yigal Allon (Palmach, a military unit in the Haganah)— challenged his political leadership, Ben-Gurion declared an unofficial war against these groups.

The *Altalena* Affair in June 1948 was the first confrontation between Ben-Gurion and Menachem Begin, leader of the Irgun. Despite Begin's agreement to dissolve Irgun and send its members to the IDF, a large quantity of arms found on *Altalena*, an Irgun ship, presented the pretext for Ben-Gurion to order a military attack on the ship, as Begin insisted on keeping twenty percent of the arms for Irgun battalion in IDF. The *Altalena* Affair, ending with the loss of lives on board and the sinking of the arms did not escalate into a civil war, as the Irgun was finally integrated into the IDF (Castlewitz 2009).

On September 17, 1948 Count Folke Bernadotte, a Swedish diplomat who worked in Israel as the United Nations (UN) mediator, was assassinated by Lehi members because his proposal offered a smaller Jewish state than the UN Resolution of November 1947. The proposal was not well received by the formal government, yet the assassination served as a pretext to arrest Lehi members and dissolve the organization (van Creveld 1998, 89). The Palmach, Haganah's elite military force, was integrated into the IDF in November. Palmach was founded in May 1941 and was the first full-time professional military unit of the Jewish military. Among the officers that served in the Palmach and later in the IDF post-independence were Moshe Dayan, Yitzhak Rabin, Yigal Allon and Chaim Bar-Lev. A defining feature of this group was its ideological adherence to socialism and the kibbutz movement, which may have complicated the process of forming a professional army (Perlmutter 1969, 35-40). However, unlike Irgun and Lehi, Palmach's

integration into the IDF took place in a smooth way, despite the fact several Palmach leaders viewed the decision to dissolve the Palmach as political, aimed to eliminate the power of Palmach and its leader Yigal Allon who achieved military victory on the Negev desert (Ibid 52).

Ben-Gurion managed to bring several autonomous paramilitary units and their leaders under civilian control, only six months after independence was declared. The integration of Palmach and Irgun into the IDF, as well as the dissolution of Lehi, allowed Ben-Gurion to weaken political competition. Moreover, integrating Palmach and Irgun into a single military structure in the IDF reduced factionalism in the military, especially during the conflict-prone post-independence period, and ensured civilian control. Ben-Gurion suggested having a small and professional army in addition to a large conscription and reserve system, would allow Israel to better follow scientific and technological developments (Perlmutter, *The Military*, 261

Ben-Gurion's Labor Party dominated Israeli politics until the 1970s. Mapai leaders of the Labor movement endorsed the Marxist-Leninist approach that all state institutions, as well as the military, should be under party control (Ben-Eliezer 2014). Military subordination to the civilian authority of the Party characterizes civil-military relation in single-party states (Ben-Eliezer's 1993; Perlmutter, 1969) as "the military appeared to the party leaders as a potential challenger that must be contained, manipulated and controlled at all times in order to prevent a serious threat to the party monopoly of power." (Peri 1983, 47). For Perlmutter (Ibid 35-7) the officers of the IDF fit the "revolutionary" model, there was ideological commitment to the party doctrine. Moreover, being surrounded by hostile states and having to fight to achieve nationhood, the notion of the people's army was reinforced. In a parliament debate in 1949, Ben-Gurion suggested having a

small and professional army in addition to a large conscription and reserve system, which should follow scientific and technological developments (Perlmutter 1969, 261).

The subjective civilian control model (cf. Huntington 1957) for civil-military relations during the Labor Party period in Israel seems to downplay two factors. While the Palmach, Haganah's elite military force, may have demonstrated ideological commitment to the Labor Party, the IDF did not have a single institutional ideology, as the integration of the Irgun and the Lehi members did not require the adoption of the political ideology of the higher echelons and the ruling party. Instead, especially after the Six Days War, the army became a pool for recruiting leaders for all parties to the multi-party system (Peri 1983). Should party-army relations describe the civil-military equilibrium in Israel, any major political shift, like the 1977 electoral victory *mahapach* (electoral upheaval) of the right-wing Likud party,<sup>8</sup> should alter the nature of civil-military relations. The absence of a major change in the military's influence in Israel after Labor lost power would indicate that party-army relations models do not describe civil-military relations in Israel.

## 6.2 Arab-Israeli Conflicts

The study of large-scale military confrontations between Israel and the surrounding Arab states remains a favorite approach by scholars to examine the role of the Israeli Defense Forces' (IDF) in policy and decision-making in the country. Ben-Eliezer (1995)<sup>9</sup> and Schiff (1999) argue that the 1967 Six-Day War showcases the influence of the military high command that not only

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<sup>8</sup> The (ha) Likud was founded by Irgun leader Menachem Begin in 1973

<sup>9</sup> Ben-Eliezer's (1993) prior assessment contradicts this view. The author argued that the Labor party enforced civilian control of the military, comparing civil-military relations in Israel to party-army relations in single party states.

overrode civilian apprehension to go to war, but also determined the political goals that were to be achieved through strategic moves in the battlefield.

Any military designs on the battlefield were subordinate to political considerations. Despite senior officers' pressure, in 1967 the civilian leadership did not go into war until the political context changed, and IDF plans of action and recommendations reflected wider national security goals. The Israeli government persisted in its efforts to exhaust diplomatic avenues with the U.S (Arye 2008, 39). It was not until the contingencies that Israeli military intelligence had warned about became a reality with Egypt's military buildup in Sinai and the mutual Egypt-Jordan defense pact that the civilian leadership endorsed IDF's recommendation for a military strike (Bregman 2000, 48-50). This was also the case in 1956, when recommendations for large-scale military actions by senior IDF officers were postponed until Israel was able to secure Great Britain and France as allies (Dayan 1955, 262; 1966, 13-15; 1976, 183; Bregman 2000, 37).

The 1982 Lebanon War features as another instance of the preponderance of the security mindset in Israeli politics (cf. Schulze 1998). Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir were former paramilitary leaders, while the CGS Rafael Eitan was an active participant in the decision-making process. However, it was Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon's political agenda to change the leadership in Lebanon by placing the Maronite leader Bashir Jumayyil in power, that dictated the IDF's moves in what was originally designed as a 48-hour operation to clear the Palestinian bases out of Lebanon, even at the cost of a direct confrontation with the Syrian army that dictated the IDF's moves in what was originally designed

as a 48-hour operation to clear the Palestinian bases out of Lebanon. Sharon was able to override both military and civilian apprehensions regarding the operation by downplaying the likelihood of a direct confrontation with the Syrian army and withholding plans for leadership change in Lebanon (Bregman 2000, 101-104). In 2000, Prime Minister Ehud Barak decided to pull the IDF out of Lebanon against the IDF's recommendations (Ben-Meir 2006, 23).

### **6.3 Security Threats**

The analysis of the IDF's influence in politics based upon the conflict and threat perceptions is problematic. The term 'frontier security,' which according to then Major-General Moshe Dayan did not apply to Israel, as its entire territory was a border (Dayan 1955, 250), held a different meaning after Israel's victory in the Six Days War, as the country revolutionized its geopolitical situation by acquiring natural defensible borders. Israel gained strategic depth by adding the central mountain ridge cutting across the West Bank and advancing along the river Jordan and the Dead Sea. Despite Israel's eventual military withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula over the 1970s, the Egyptian air threat to Israel from forward airfields in Sinai was successfully eliminated. Thus, the external political conditions that constituted a perceived existential external threat to Israel were significantly altered after 1967.

However, the acquisition of West Bank and Gaza, followed by the development of Israeli settlements in territories where Arabs were the majority population, expanded the role of the military into domestic security. The establishment of settlements in unpopulated areas constituted a major pillar of the Israel security doctrine as outlined in 1949. Settlement policy was derived from the belief that they would reinforce the state's capacity to govern. The IDF maintained direct supervision of the construction, as the settlements were developed and fortified

as military strongholds (Ben-Eliezer 1995, 276-280). Therefore, the army already played an important role by carrying out non-military tasks in the areas of immigration, assimilation and settlement. The diversity introduced by the establishment of settlements in Arab populated areas prompted a reconsideration of the nature of threats to the Israeli state.

## **6.4 Occupied Territories**

The categorization of the occupied territories produced many deadlocks in the peace negotiations, as the presence of settlements and Israeli citizen settlers is a subject of domestic political debate. As the territories are not within the internationally recognized borders of Israel, it is a foreign policy issue, thus part of the external environment that Israel has perceived as a threat to its existence. The Israeli doctrine of warfare formulated during the 1956 Sinai Campaign and the Six Day War was offensive, based on pre-emptive strike and transferring the war into enemy soil (Schiff 1999, 437). Theoretically, the presence of a population that until previously were considered external enemies within state boundaries posed internal threats to state security. In practice, the IDF assumed an executive role in administering the settlements and carrying out settlement policies, forming close relations with the settlers (Ben-Eliezer 1995, 272) and designing settlement plans that resulted in profound demographic changes in the occupied territories with implications for the civilian leadership's policy-making (Kimmerling 2002, 1134).

The dismantling of settlements in Gaza in 2005 was authorized by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, one of the generals of the IDF who were "objects of sweeping admiration and emulation" (Ben-Eliezer 1998, 225) because of the military success in the Sinai front. As a politician he had advocated the territorial expansion of Israel

to prevent future partition of the state and during his tenures oversaw the increase of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.

The naval blockade of Gaza was not lifted, and travel restrictions remained in place for the population. The government's unilateral decision to disengage was met with fierce opposition within the right-wing ruling Likud party, ultimately forcing Sharon's resignation from party leadership and early elections. The changing nature of security threats to Israel, do not permit an evaluation of civil-military relations by examining the army's influence based on threat assessment; the new geographic setting and the acquisition of natural defensive lines in 1967 allowed Israel to consolidate its hold of the Negev desert and thus eliminate the threat from a potential land bridge between Egypt and Jordan. On the other hand, the establishment of settlements in Gaza and the West Bank introduced quasi-internal threats to the Israeli states, as the status of the territories remained disputed.

The IDF enforced the Israeli settlement policy as part of its security doctrine, undertaking an active role constructing and fortifying Israeli settlements in areas where the majority of the population were Palestinians. In the West Bank and Gaza there is no separation of the civil from the military sphere, the occupied territories are in fact ruled by the Israeli army. However, the danger arising from the informal connections between the army and societal groups (cf. Ben-Eliezer 1998), such as the settlers, did not materialize in the form a military coup; the IDF did not appear to consider the reversal of the settlement policy as a security threat or as an attack to its group interests. The source and intensity of threats to Israeli security have changed, however no major change in civil-military relations can be observed.



## **6.5 The impact of the 1967 Six Days War and the 1982 Lebanon War on civil-military relations**

Israel's first two decades was a critical time period during which the military's role in decision making was shaped. The officers served under strong civilian control, but the IDF had maintained significant autonomy in security issues, allowing the military to have exceptional influence in the decision-making process on issues requiring the use of force. Israel could be described as a modern political system, where any decisions to go to war or negotiate peace are made by civilian authorities who consult the military professionals when necessary, but the it was IDF's triumphs in the battlefield have solidified its image is a highly professional organization whose advice on related matters should be heeded by the government.

The Six Day War had been an important military victory, a critical juncture that had produced two developments. The first, as mentioned above was the acquisition of new territories West Bank, Gaza, the Golan Heights, Sinai, and East Jerusalem, which fundamentally altered the security environment and became an important subject of political debates. The second was that these military victories changed the way the IDF participated in politics as the civilian leadership increasingly came to rely on expert advice. The appointment of Moshe Dayan, during the Six Days War, as the Defense Minister, set off a tradition whereby after military victory, the generals of this war would go on to hold important posts in the government, even become Prime Ministers. The combined effect of these two outcomes was that politicized and ambitious military generals, like Ariel Sharon, who held a particular ideology on the settlements, would join the ranks of or form a political party that would reflect this ideology and garner support from the Israel society more easily than civilian politicians (Ben-Eliezer 1998, 225).

The entrance of retired generals into politics as a second career is a common phenomenon in Israeli political life, especially ever since the 1967 Six Days War. While politicians with military background enter politics after retirement in other countries as well, the unique feature about Israel is that IDF officers retire usually in their forties, which means they can pursue politics as a second career. Early retirement in Israel was established in the mid-1950s to prevent the aging of the officer corps and allow younger officers with high morale to join the army (Horowitz 1982, 86). These type of indirect interventions of the IDF high command behind-the-scenes has been accepted as a part of the political system.

Operational successes in the battlefield since 1948 continuing into the 1960s established the IDF as the national hero of the Israeli society, shielding its intervention in politics from criticism, at least until the relatively large loss of life sustained by the IDF in the 1982 Lebanon invasion. However, just as the 1956 and 1967 were significant in legitimizing the military's indirect influence and participation in politics, the 1982 invasion of Lebanon and Israel's subsequent protracted engagement highlighted how Israeli society had also become a significant determinant in civil-military relations. False intelligence assessments in 1973 resulted in Israel's eventual withdrawal from the Sinai over the next decade. The war in Lebanon seemed to reveal cracks within the society and the IDF, as the military and civilian disagreements over the purpose the stationing of troops in Southern Lebanon appear to shatter the of a domestic consensus over foreign policy decisions (Ben-Eliezer 2001, 153).

The prestige of the IDF further declined during the Lebanon War of 1982, as especially the massacres in Sabra and Shatila raised criticisms against the government, particular Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, one of the glorified generals of the Suez War and the Six Days War, who seemed so determined to see a regime change in Lebanon and drag the Syrians into war, that he lied to his government (Peri 1983, 118). The Israeli society has started to discuss “war of choice” and questioned the consequences of the Lebanon War of 1982. As a result, Sharon had to resign as Defense Minister, but he remained at the government as Minister of Portfolio (Bell 2005, 252).

Since the 1980s, probably also owing to the development of alternative areas such as industry for former officers to pursue a second careers, the number of the retired military officers entering politics has decreased (Lissak and Maman 1999, 230). However, there has been decreasing demand for retired officers due to public criticism of IDF’s acts in Lebanon and the settlements. The Agranat Commission was established after the 1973 Yom Kippur War and advised for constitutional changes regarding civil-military relations. Dayan resigned, although he was not found responsible (Peri 1983, 257). The report of the Winograd Commission about the Second Lebanon War of 2006 criticized not only the operational shortcomings, but also the strategic planning, the decision-making processes and the unclear role and responsibility definitions, emphasizing the inordinate influence of the Chief of Staff (Meir, 2008). Last but not least, the poor performance of the IDF during the Second Lebanon War dropped the recruitment rates even more, making the IDF dependent more on religious and settler conscripts, who would be less inclined to obey an evacuation order and assist in dismantling a settlement, should that be the command (Yagil 2011, 29).

## **7. Conclusion**

One of the most prominent features of the Turkish and Israeli political systems has been the strong place of the militaries in politics. What is common for both Israel and Turkey is that despite having democratic systems, civilian control over the military is not consolidated. Both the Turkish and the Israel military have intervened indirectly in politics through exerting influence or pressure over the civilian leadership. The aim of this study has been to compare military interventions in Israel and Turkey. The reason has been to understand why the Turkish military has directly intervened in politics to force a change of the civilian government (1971 and 1997) or implement direct military rule in (1960 and 1980) and why the Israeli military hasn't.

The single-party era in Turkey (1923-1946) was formative in establishing the role of the military as the protector of the state, but most importantly of the regime. The party created by Kemal Mustafa Atatürk, the Republican People's Party (CHP), was based on a coalition of military and civil bureaucrats, and also founded the Republic. During the single-party era, civil-military relations in the Turkish Republic were characterized by a cooperation between the civilian and military leadership, as key government posts were occupied by former military leaders. As most of the politicians in top leadership posts, like Ataturk were army men, they had close personal ties with the military leadership. The CHP used the military to consolidate control of the state and the military became the guardian of the state and the regime, developing a strong sense of corporate identity and entitlement to power.

The transition to a multi-party electoral system upset the partnership between the civilian and military leaderships. Coalition governments unsuccessfully attempted either to marginalize or

to coopt the military. Efforts to push the military away from political institutions forced the civilian and military leaderships into repeated clashes, with the military intervening to uphold the political order and reconsolidate its power. In order to have functioning democracies, powerful political participatory institutions are required, yet in Turkey political parties have been weak. Between the 1960 and 1980 coups eighteen governments were formed because parties were unable to form strong coalition governments, increasing political and economic instability in the country. It was not until 2002, when the AKP was able to establish a strong government without any coalition partners, that the military's role and ability to intervene were challenged. Civil-military relations in Turkey have witnessed dramatic changes since AKP's second term in office, which put an end to direct military interventions and dramatically weakened indirect military interventions in politics.

Contrary to Turkey, the multi-party politics democratic system in Israel is not characterized by intense political competition between the military and the civilian leadership as institutions. Key positions in government system have often been held by former senior officers of the IDF, with candidates from the military staffing the party leadership across the political spectrum. The borders between the civilian and military echelons are not strictly delineated; military officers easily enter the political arena post-retirement, as they did during the state-building period when the paramilitary organizations were integrated into a professional army and political competition was channeled through the party system.

Unlike Turkey, the military and civilian leadership did not adhere to a single political ideology, nor did the military seek to impose any institutional ideology on the civilian leadership. The military instead imported ideologies developed in the civilian sphere, an indication of the

military's subordination to the state and acceptance of the legitimacy of civilian authorities. During the Single-Party era in Turkey (1923-1946), the Kemalist coalition between military officers and state bureaucrats essentially banned opposition parties that challenged Kemalist ideology. The transition to a multi-party system and the ascendance of parties that sought to marginalize the Kemalists prompted military intervention to secure the military's political role and uphold the founding principles of the state. During the Labor Party's political hegemony in Israel, the competition between the ideologically diverse military underground organizations was transferred to the multi-party system. Political disputes between the civilian and military elites are settled through political institutions.

Modernization theory scholars like Halpern (1963) and Janowitz (1964) believed that militaries in developing countries are involved in nation-building and the modernization process, therefore they considered them progressive forces. In Turkey the military undertook projects mainly to educate and industrialize the society, yet as the TAF retained its institutional autonomy and political ideology, they did not require civilian allies to overthrow threats to the republic, leading to divergence between the civilian and military leadership. During the 1990s the military's role further eroded, as political parties with parliamentary majority were able to legislate against the military's legal and moral claims to guardianship status. In Israel, the large reserve system and number of conscripts mean that the military has become a significant part of the society's life, and that operational successes and failures will impact the perception of the army. While the military's expertise in security issues is not publicly contested, the current Prime Minister and Defense Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is the first PM with the least military experience but the most vocal about the military's influence.

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